

The Doudy Draw, Flatirons Vista and Eldorado Mountain area has it all: golden grasslands, thick pine forests, sweeping vistas, rare and seldom-seen species, and historic sites that link us to our past. Travel softly and you may be rewarded with visions that last a lifetime.

Where East Meets West

Where the prairies of the Great Plains meet the forests of the Rocky Mountains, Eastern plants and animals rub up against their Western counterparts. The result: some of the best wildlife viewing in Colorado.

Birds gather here every summer to nest on the ground amid the wildflowers of the prairie. Please don't venture off trail or you might crush the eggs of these ground-nesting birds! Down in the shrub thickets, listen for the spotted towhee, who sings,

"Drink your tea-ee-ee-ee-ee," or the loud and raucous calls of the yellow-breasted chat. The pine forests host different birds. With luck, you may see a flock of wild turkeys or an elusive northern goshawk.

Photos: Pasque Flower (Bill May), Wild Turkey (Christian Nunes), Elk (Joseph Connell), Blue Mist Penstemon (Ilan Kelman)



The Eldorado Mountain area is one of the few places left along the Front Range where elk can still complete their annual migration from the mountains to the plains without encountering human development. Keep your eyes open for hoof prints and droppings. You might also spy mountain lions, black bears, a black Abert's squirrel, coyotes or mule deer.

The area is also a wildflower lover's paradise. Wildflowers provide nectar for butterflies, bees and hummingbirds. Enjoy the flowers, but please don't pick them.

Eldorado Mountain Habitat Conservation Area

The slopes of Eldorado Mountain preserve some of the most fragile habitat in the Front Range. To protect this irreplaceable resource, off-trail travel through the Habitat Conservation Area (HCA) is prohibited without a permit. See the map in this brochure for HCA boundaries. You can always enjoy HCAs from the trail. To obtain a permit, visit www.osmppermits.org or call 303-441-3440.



LEAVE NO TRACE ON OPEN SPACE & MOUNTAIN PARKS



Manage Your Dog

Others may not appreciate your dog's company. If you are not sure, ask before allowing your dog to approach. Keep your dog nearby and under control. Carry and use a leash as required.

Pick Up Poop

Phew! Dog poop stinks, causes severe damage to the environment, and others can step in it. Pack a pick-up bag and always pick up your dog's poop — wherever it's left.



Stay on Trail

Traveling on trail leaves room for wildlife and their homes. Shortcutting trails causes erosion. Get muddy! Step right through puddles. Boots dry overnight; plants take years to recover.

Trash Your Trash

Please take out all trash — yours and others'. Even organic garbage such as orange peels, apple cores and food scraps, take years to break down. Animals which feed on trash often die!



Leave It as You Find It

Picking flowers, collecting rocks, or picking berries may not seem to be a big deal, but it means others won't have a chance to enjoy them. Millions of people visit Open Space & Mountain Parks. If each takes something, what will remain?



Share Our Trails

We all enjoy Open Space & Mountain Parks in different ways. Pay attention, expect to encounter others and be courteous. Yield to all.



Open Space & Mountain Parks

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Doudy Draw Eldorado Mountain Trails Guide



Photo: Steve Gaudin

ENJOY.



PROTECT.

Clues from the Past

The rocks under your feet tell tales of an ancient ocean that once lapped at a prehistoric coastline. Along Spring Brook Loop near Fowler Trail, look for the ripple patterns in the exposed cliffs of Dakota Sandstone. Run your fingers over the ridges where waves left their mark on a sandy beach 100 million years ago. Herds of dinosaurs trod these

sands, leaving footprints you can still see in similar rocks at Dinosaur Ridge near Golden. Over time, the land subsided and the beach was swallowed by a sea that stretched across North America from the Gulf of Mexico to Hudson Bay.

Soil washed into the ocean from the surrounding lands and gradually settled to the bottom, creating a layer of soft crumbly rock more than a mile thick. This is Pierre Shale, found in Doudy Draw and along the mesa edge at Flatirons Vista and the Spring Brook Loop. Pierre Shale forms slippery clay-rich soils that stick to your boots. Since the soils are very prone to erosion and slumping, we ask that you avoid these trails during wet or muddy conditions.



Much more recently, people made their homes here. American Indians left stone rings in various places. This area afforded a rich selection of plants for food, medicine and grazing for horses, as well as a wide variety of game animals.

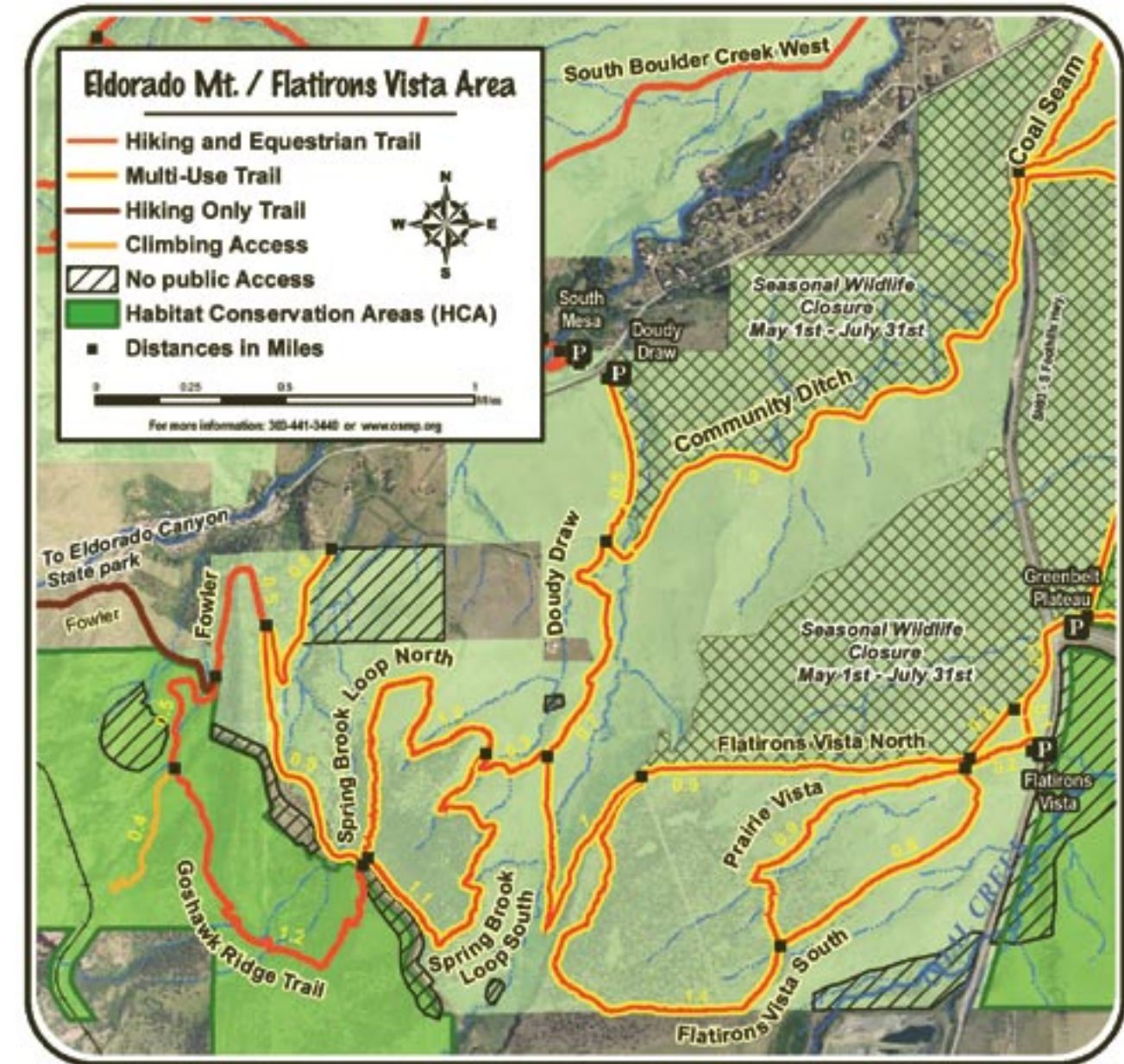
Euro-American settlers began arriving in 1859; they also left their mark on the land. Look for the Denver, Utah & Pacific railroad grade, which crosses the trail system in several places. Planned in 1881 by David Moffat, this narrow gauge railroad was intended to cross the mountains through a series of long tunnels. Less than two miles of the grade was constructed before financing collapsed and the project was abandoned. From the railroad's spectacular hill cut on the Fowler Trail, look east across the valley to see the grade on the slope of the opposite mesa.

Railroad workers may also have built the small stone shelters located along the Goshawk Ridge trail. Now roofless, these humble structures may have once provided hearth and home to tired men. Ranchers grazed their herds on the rich grasses. In the 1920s or 30s, the Beasley family built this wooden corral and cattle loading chute near the South Boulder Diversion Canal.



All historic structures and artifacts are protected on OSMP. Please do not climb or damage them.

Doudy Draw / Eldorado Mountain



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